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ABSTRACT

The newsletters of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) (California) provide commission news and discussions on current issues and policies regarding institutional accreditation. The January 2000 issue states that recent annual reports submitted by member institutions to ACCJC have revealed confusion about what constitutes an institutional change that should be reported to the commission as substantive. Sometimes, an institution plans a change between comprehensive evaluations that is substantive--a change altering the objectives or the scope of the institution, modifying the nature of the constituencies it seeks to serve, or changing the geographic area(s) served. The April 2000 issue discusses Project Renewal, an evaluation plan that is being implemented at a time when a significant list of issues with quality assurance implications confronts American higher education: distance learning; virtual libraries and the rapidly changing concept of information literacy; and sequential or simultaneous enrollment in a number of life-long learning institutions. The June 2000 issue discusses appointments made to the commission, and the October 2000 issue presents the 2000 Accreditation Survey results, which included very high approval ratings for current accreditation standards. Respondents were pleased with ACCJC's efforts to communicate with, train, and assist colleges. (JA)

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Accreditation Notes, 2000

Accreditation Committee for Community and Junior Colleges

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January 2000

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES—What Are They? When Should They Be Reported?

Recent Annual Reports submitted by member institutions to ACCJC have revealed confusion about what constitutes an institutional change that should be reported to the Commission as a Substantive Change. The following discussion and review of Commission policy are intended to assist institutions in deliberating changes and in reporting them in a timely manner.

ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE

March 20-21, 2000

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Accreditation affirms that an institution has established conditions and procedures under which its mission and goals can be realized and that it appears in fact to be accomplishing them. When an institution is accredited, or its accreditation is reaffirmed, it is accredited for conditions existing at the time of that action by the Commission. However, recognizing that institutions are dynamic, Commission policy allows for institutions to report for Commission review proposed changes that are substantive in nature.

Most changes, such as adding or dropping courses, developing new options that are associated with existing offerings, or changing personnel, are not substantive and are part of the on-going business of institutions. Special programs and off-campus educational activities frequently augment learning options for students. Sometimes, however, an institution plans a change between comprehensive evaluations that is substantive---a change altering the objectives or the scope of the institution, modifying the nature of the constituencies it seeks to serve, or changing the geographic area(s) served. These changes, because they may affect the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the total institution, are subject to review by the Commission both **prior to as well as subsequent to implementation.**

Although a principle of institutional accreditation is that everything done in the name of the institution is covered by its accreditation, substantive changes are not automatically included. Anything done without appropriate concern for consistency with an institution's stated mission and concern for quality and integrity can threaten the accredited status of the entire institution.

An institution considering a substantive change is urged to contact Commission staff early in its deliberations, describing the proposed change, the need for the change, and the anticipated effects. Commission staff will review the proposal to determine whether or not it is indeed substantive. Size, complexity, maturity, and experience of the institution are important factors. What might be a minor change for one institution may well be a major change for another institution.

Examples of Substantive Change

A substantive change in an institution is one which may significantly affect its nature, quality, objectives, scope or control. Examples of substantive changes include:

- Changing an institution's private or public character, including changes in the denominational character of a religiously-affiliated institution.

• Offering courses or programs outside the geographic region served by the institution at the time of the previous evaluation, or outside the WASC region, including international sites.

• Moving to a new location or establishing major off-campus units.

• Offering programs at a degree level different from that listed for the institution in the WASC Directory.

• Contracting with a non-regionally accredited organization for that organization to provide courses or programs on behalf of the institution.

• Change in educational purposes and/or courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in terms of either the content or method of delivery, from those operative at the time of the most recent evaluation, including changes in constituencies or clientele.

• Offering a degree in distance learning mode.

• Changing sponsorship or form of control, including change of ownership of a proprietary institution.

• Merging with another institution.

If Commission staff determine that the proposed change is substantive in nature, the institution will be asked to submit a more detailed statement for review by the Commission's Committee on Substantive Change. The Committee may approve the change or refer the change to the Commission for action at either the January or June meeting.

Instructions regarding content and format for a Substantive Change Report can be found in the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition, pp.102-105 and the Guide to Institutional Self Study and Reports to Commission, 1997 Edition, pp.41-42. Both Handbooks are available on the ACCJC web site—www.wascweb.org.

At the January Commission meeting, it was determined that institutions which are eligible for, but have not yet achieved candidacy, may not submit Substantive Change Reports. As part of its Spring activities, the Commission's Policy Committee will be reviewing the Substantive Change policy. This activity will lead to preparation of a Handbook on Substantive Change which should be ready for distribution later this year.

Member institutions are reminded that timely contact with Commission staff as well as timely submission of proposals for change will ensure that institutions are complying with Commission policy and can proceed with development of the proposed program.

Project Renewal

The Commission has now adopted a plan that addresses its commitment to regular and comprehensive evaluation of processes and standards. This six-year cycle of evaluation parallels the regular cycle of institutional self study. The plan calls for involvement of Commissioners, representatives from member institutions, and the general public. The plan will focus on evaluating the entire range of Commission activities and services as well as the standards themselves. Means of gathering relevant information will include: a survey of member institutions; ethnographic interviews of key members of institutions; an external review of all documents, policies, processes, and recent accreditation literature; and an internal review of all documents, policies, and evaluation mechanisms. The standards will be reviewed by task forces under the direction of an editorial board.

This very extensive renewal project will begin immediately with the selection of individuals to perform the various activities of the plan. The expectation is that new standards will be developed by Fall 2002.

Spring Assessment Institute

Spokesperson **Dr. Jing Luan** reports that a carefully designed and well packaged Assessment Institute, hosted by **Cabrillo College**, will be held in Monterey on March 20 and 21st. Based on feedback from a very successful Assessment Institute held in Long Beach in October, refinements have been made to the workshops. The Institute will once again provide exposure to nationally known experts in the field of assessment such as **Thomas Angelo** and **Barbara Wright**. Hands-on and easy to understand experiences and models will be offered. Member institutions are urged to attend this low cost institute in teams, since opportunities will be provided for creating institutional assessment plans.

The Institute is sponsored by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Research and Planning Group. Funding is from a grant awarded by the Chancellor's Office. Registration information is now available on the Institute's web site at www.ca-assessment-inst.org/reg.html.

Reports from the Pacific

The January 2000 Commission meeting in Guam provided an opportunity for Commissioners to meet with the leaders of member institutions from the Pacific and to hear presentations from them on the status of their colleges. Member institutions making presentations included Guam Community College, the University of Hawaii Community Colleges, College of Micronesia-FSM, College of the Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas College, and Palau Community College. Following is a synopsis of the presentations of each of these colleges which, with the exception of Hawaii and Guam, are the only institutions of higher education available in these areas.

Guam Community College

As the westernmost unincorporated territory of the United States, Guam (the name comes from a Chamorro word meaning "we have") is the largest island in the western Pacific. The Chamorro comprise the largest ethnic group on the island. Official languages are English and Chamorro.

Guam Community College was founded in 1977, currently enrolls over 2,000 students, and offers more than 50 degrees and certificates. The intent of the legislation that created Guam Community College was to strengthen and consolidate vocational education on Guam. **Vice President for Academic Affairs John Rider** reported that the college's vocational degrees continue to graduate a substantial number of students, with degrees and certificates in computer areas having doubled in recent years. As an addition to its vocational degrees and programs, the college also offers many apprenticeship programs designed to award students with journeyworker certificates.

Though the emphasis is on vocational preparation, the college also offers a general education curriculum which prepares students for transfer.

The President of Guam Community College, **John Cruz**, is a member of the Commission.

University of Hawaii Community Colleges

This is a statewide system composed of community colleges on the islands of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui as well as four colleges on the island of Oahu—Honolulu, Kapiolani, Leeward, and Windward Community Colleges. The mission of these seven community colleges is to offer the lower-division courses that prepare students for transfer, the occupation/technical courses that prepare students for the work force, and the opportunities for continuing education and community services. **Executive Vice Chancellor Michael Rota** commented on the long tradition of the vocation/technical school in Hawaii (dating from 1920) and noted that the Hawaii Community Colleges are a major resource for educating and training residents throughout the state. Full time faculty and staff of these colleges numbers over 1,400 individuals with a student enrollment of over 25,000. Kapiolani Community College is the largest in the system, with Kauai Community College being the smallest. Founded in 1972, Windward College is the youngest of the colleges.

In addition to the liberal arts, the colleges offer programs in such areas as aeronautics, TV production, nursing/allied health, and welding, as well as non-credit programs in automotive technology, computer applications, and the visitor industry. The system is offering inter-island distance education as a means of reaching students in more remote areas. Among its priorities, the system is focusing on strengthening its role in Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific affairs by promoting increased student enrollment in Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific languages, history and culture. The colleges are actively recruiting under-represented student populations, especially Hawaiians. Providing service to the state of Hawaii by delivering education and training to meet the growing demands for mid-level and advanced technicians is also a priority.

The Hawaii Community College system operates under the regents of the University of Hawaii. Chancellor of this system is **Dr. Joyce Tsunoda**, a member of the Commission.

College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is the national college of the Federated States of Micronesia. It was established in 1970 as the College of Micronesia. At that time, it served students from the Northern Marianas, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, and Pohnpei and focused on teacher training. In 1993, the college took its current name and adopted its current mission—to provide educational opportunity for citizens of the Federated States. Its focus is on individual growth, national unity, scholarship, and service. The college has five campuses and enrolls 1,800 students system wide. The 78 full-time faculty provide instruction in an array of degrees and certificates, including a program in teacher education. Certificates offered include several connected to the fishing industries found in Micronesia.

According to COM-FSM **President Susan Moses**, a building program has added new facilities on all campuses and community efforts to create an endowment fund have met with spectacular success. In addition to U.S. federal grants, the college has received foreign assistance from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, People's Republic of China, Japan, Canada, Korea, and other European countries.

College of the Marshall Islands

Originally part of the College of Micronesia system, College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) became an independent

college in 1993. The college serves students from the Marshall Islands (there are 29 major atolls and 5 islands) and other Pacific island nations. It is located 1,900 miles east of Guam and has two major urban centers—the atoll islands of Majuro and Kwajalein, each with a campus. These atolls are sometimes only 3-4 feet above sea level and are one-fourth mile wide. One-half of the population of this developing island nation is under age 15.

Current enrollment at CMI is about 600 students and continues to grow. Because many students need assistance in developing English proficiency, the college provides developmental studies focusing on English skills. In addition, it offers degrees in education, business, marine science, liberal arts, and several vocational programs. The program in education prepares elementary teachers and includes Marshallese studies.

President Alfred Capelle reports that some of the facilities date from the late 50's, but that some modest improvements have occurred recently, including creation of a faculty office building and some new classrooms that are part

of the teacher education program. He reports a need to double the number of elementary teachers.

Northern Marianas College

Northern Marianas College (NMC) is located on the Pacific Island of Saipan, the capitol of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It was established in 1981 and has small centers on the islands of Tinian and Rota. Enrollment at NMC is currently 1,900 students. The college offers degrees in agriculture, liberal arts, business, hospitality management, marine technology, and education, including a bachelor's degree. Certificates and degrees are offered in an array of vocational areas.

The newly retired founding President of the college, **Agnes McPhetres**, reports that decreases in financial support due to the economic downturn in Asia have impacted the college, but downsizing in administrative staff and computerization of some functions have eased the impact of reduced income. She adds that the current Board of Trustees and the interim president, **Jack Sablan,** are poised to provide leadership in implementing a new Master Plan.

Palau Community College

The Republic of Palau became an independent island nation in 1994. Geographically, it is part of Micronesia. Nine of its 300 islands are inhabited.

Palau Community College (PCC) was founded in 1969, having grown out of a trade school begun in June 1927 during the Japanese administration prior to World War II. By 1978, it was known as Micronesian Occupational College, a part of the College of Micronesia. In 1993, it officially became Palau Community College. The college is located in Koror, Palau, about 500 miles east of Manila (10,000 miles from Washington, D.C.!). Many of its 1,400 students get to the college by boat.

PCC offers degrees in traditional fields and, as part of its commitment to addressing the shortage of teachers, it offers

a degree in education. The college's three schools include the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, and the School of Engineering. Certificates are offered in a myriad of programs and a program in marine science is in the planning stages.

According to **President Patrick Tellei**, himself a graduate of PCC, the college faces challenges in developing endowment funds, developing strategic plans, and addressing concerns about the evolving relationship between Palau and the United States.

Pacific Postsecondary Education Council (PPEC)

Executive Director David B. Wolf presented an update on accreditation issues to the members of the PPEC. ACCJC member insitutions of the Council include the colleges mentioned above, as well as American Samoa Community College.

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Commission Actions: Institutions

Reaffirmed Accreditation
Brooks College
College of the Redwoods
DeAnza College
Foothill College
Irvine Valley College
Mt. San Jacinto College
Queen of the Holy Rosary College
Saddleback College
Shasta College
Solano College
Vista Community College
Yuba College

Granted Initial Accreditation
Santiago Canyon College

Accepted Midterm Report
Butte College
Chabot College
College of the Canyons
Cosumnes River College
Cuesta College
Las Positas College
Los Angeles City College
Palomar College
Santa Barbara City College
Santa Rosa Junior College
Southwestern College
Taft College
Vista Community College

Accepted Focused Midterm Report
American Samoa Community College
Laney College
Pasadena City College
San Bernardino Valley College

Accepted Focused Midterm Report with Visit
College of the Marshall Islands
East Los Angeles College
Long Beach City College
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
Merritt College

Accepted Interim Report
Napa Valley College

Accepted Interim Report with Visit
Brooks College
College of Oceaneering
College of the Desert
Moorpark College
Sacramento City College

Accepted Progress Report
Fresno City College
Los Medanos College
San Jose City College

Accepted Progress Report with Visit
D-Q University
Irvine Valley College
Saddleback College
Vista Community College

Accepted Substantive Change Report
American Academy of Dramatic Arts West
Brooks College

Accepted Show Cause Report and Placed on Probation
San Francisco College of Mortuary Science

Granted Eligibility
Copper Mountain College

Commission Actions: Policies

At its January meeting, the Commission reviewed proposals on several policies. These policies concerned Conflict of Interest, Code of Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions, and the proposed Interregional Policies on Accreditation of Institutions Operating Across Regions. In addition, the Commission adopted a policy on Access to Commission Meetings.

The revision of the Conflict of Interest Policy addresses conflict of interest issues for Commissioners, team chairs and team members, consultants, administrative staff, and other agency representatives. It is based on the belief "that those who engage in accreditation activities must make every effort to protect the integrity of accrediting processes and outcomes." The policy will be developed further by the Policy Committee for consideration by the Commission at its June 2000 meeting.

The revision of the Code of Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions adds detail to the existing policy delineating the Commission's commitment to the institutions it accredits. This policy, approved as a first reading, will be distributed to member institutions for review preparatory to consideration for adoption by the Commission at its June 2000 meeting.

The proposed Interregional Policies on Accreditation of Institutions Operating Across Regions include two policies: one that addresses the evaluation of institutions operating interregionally and one addressing separately accreditable institutions. The challenges of accrediting institutions operating interregionally have increased in recent years with development of new institutions whose missions are national in scope, and by the continuing expansion of programming across regional boundaries by more traditional providers. As a result, differences among the regional commissions have become the object of critical attention and demands for equal treatment have increased. In response, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC), which is comprised of representatives from each of the eight higher education regional accrediting commissions, has developed these proposed policies for the consideration of each member commission. These policies are designed to encompass only those instructional activities which are physically present in another region, operate with appropriate state authorization, and provide the equivalent to 50% or more of a degree program. This proposed policy, approved as a first reading, will now be distributed to member institutions for review and comment.

The revised policy on Access to Commission Meetings was adopted by the Commission. This policy, reviewed by member institutions in recent months, describes the procedures for addressing or making a presentation to the Commission and defines the functions of Commission executive sessions. Full text of adopted policies such as this will be sent to member institutions this Spring and will be posted on the Commission's web site in February. The web site address is www.wascweb.org.

The Commission also voted to accept Substantive Change Reports only from accredited institutions or those in Candidacy.

Evaluation Schedule for Spring 2000

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo a comprehensive visit in Spring 2000 and a review by the Commission at its June 2000 meeting. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to Executive Director David B. Wolf at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled commission consideration.

Barstow College
City College of San Francisco
Columbia College
Defense Language Institute
Feather River College
Fresno City College
Guam Community College
Heald Colleges
Kelsey-Jenney College
Lake Tahoe Community College
Los Angeles Harbor College
Los Angeles Southwest College
Modesto Junior College
Reedley College
Hawaii Tokai International College
West Los Angeles College

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Accreditation Notes
3402 Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

April 2000

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

PROJECT RENEWAL: AN EVALUATION PLAN FOR THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

by Gari Browning, Associate Director

Introduction

Dr. Gari Browning

The ACCJC believes that regular and comprehensive evaluation is necessary for improvement. To ensure that accreditation keeps pace with the ever increasing rate of change in higher education and to parallel the regular cycle of institutional accreditation, renewal of Commission processes and standards occurs at six-year intervals. Since the last review ended in 1996, the time for renewal is at hand. In order to improve these processes and standards, to model for member institutions the evaluation needed for self-improvement, to assess the value of the accreditation process for institutional improvement, and to provide quality assurance to the public and the students of community and junior colleges, Project Renewal will:

- Involve both commissioners (internal) and representatives of member institutions and the general public (external)
- Gather information through a variety of carefully selected research methodologies, including surveys, ethnographic interviews, and analyses of Commission processes
- Provide longitudinal as well as current evaluative information
- Collect and analyze the best practices of accreditation
- Result in a review and revision of the standards for accreditation

Context

Project Renewal is being initiated at a time when an impressive list of issues with quality assurance implications confronts American higher education. As we enter this century, the appearance of new structural forms of higher education is increasingly frequent. "Traditional" institutions are incorporating new approaches and structural arrangements to respond to forecasts of increased demand, changes in student attendance preferences, anticipated increases in provider competition, and the potential of new technologies. Many of these issues have implications for the content of the Commission's standards, and the way it does its business. A more detailed listing (in no particular order) of changes facing institutions may serve to dramatize their extent and diversity:

- Distance Learning and the attendant issues relating to instructional and student support services, and student readiness
- Virtual libraries and the rapidly changing concept of information literacy
- Student attendance patterns that often include sequential or even simultaneous enrollment in a number of life-long learning institutions before the requirements for a certificate or degree are completed, and new imperatives for life long learning

- Educational effectiveness and accountability and the continuing development of appropriate measures at the institutional, program and course level
- Faculty roles including the emergence of specialization (unbundling), and matters surrounding adjunct faculty
- Student diversity in an environment where affirmative action policies are changing
- Concerns for system efficiency and the consolidation of functions (such as remediation), the emergence of higher education "centers" in lieu of new campuses, and uniform transfer delineations
- Technology as an increasingly complex policy, planning and fiscal matter, including issues pertaining to faculty and student support and training, and academic honesty and ethics
- The Learning Paradigm, the Competency Movement, and the challenges of specifying learning outcomes
- Out-sourcing support services, including instructional support services
- Time-to-degree, and the frequency with which institutions offer courses
- The Carnegie Unit and adaptations of it or alternatives to it
- Custom training under contract and the attendant mission and curriculum control matters
- International Education, both for local students going abroad and foreign nationals in their native country

In addition, the world of quality assurance and improvement is itself subject to the forces of change. Some of the issues noted above call into question the effectiveness of the traditional paradigm, and the accreditation community is responding. Some of the current issues include:

- Increased interregional cooperation, especially with regard to site-based operations and distance education
- Technology and new methods of communicating between a commission and member institutions or the public
- Competition from select national and international accreditors
- Public disclosure and the call for increased institutional information
- Alternative quality assurance/improvement systems such as the Baldrige Award or the "academic audit"

These forces and others that will come to light during the conduct of Project Renewal will impact Commission standards and practices.

Important Themes for Evaluation

The Commission has outlined the central themes important to accreditation that it wishes to evaluate. In order for accreditation to maximize institutional attention to self improvement, the Commmission will evaluate the effect of the accreditation process at the institutional level, including the impact of self study plans and team recommendations on institutional actions; the extent to which the accreditation processes advance college measurement of learning; the capacity of the institutions to improve when problems are identified; and the impact of Commission services in assisting institutions with self improvement. These are some of the themes that have been matched to evaluation approaches so that the information the Commission seeks can be gathered and assessed appropriately.

The Commission will also evaluate the efficiency of its own processes, procedures, and reports, particularly the effectiveness of the self study process, teams and team chairs, and the services and materials ACCJC provides to institutions. The desired result is continuous improvement of the accreditation process.

Evaluation Plan

To ensure that Project Renewal covers the issues the Commission believes are key to a comprehensive redesign of its policies, procedures, and standards, several evaluation approaches or means of gathering relevant information will be used:

- An institutional survey which captures institutional views on current issues as well as a longitudinal view of how institutions perceive the accreditation process
- Interviews of key members of institutions to gain in-depth perspectives on critical aspects of accreditation
- An external review to evaluate all documents, policies, processes, and recent literature regarding the quality of accreditation

- An internal review to review all documents and policies and to compile relevant summaries of ongoing evaluations (e.g., team evaluations, training evaluations) and institutional reports. The review will also include surveys or interviews of Commissioners to gather their insights on internal processes.

Once the evaluations listed above are completed, a thorough review of the ACCJC standards will be conducted. The goal of the review will be to redesign the standards and issue a new version of them in the fall, 2002. Likewise, the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, the Guide to Institutional Self Study & Reports to the Commission, and all training materials will be revised to reflect the new standards. A comprehensive Renewal Plan is the anticipated product of this effort. Throughout the process, member institutions will be informed and their input solicited. All member institutions have received a copy of the complete Project Renewal Plan and Time Line. In addition, the plan is available on the web site at www.wascweb.org. Please send your ideas and suggestions to ACCJC at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403; or e-mail us at accjc@aol.com.

2000-2001 WORKSHOP DATES SET

Each year, ACCJC holds workshops to train evaluators and team chairs as well as those who will participate in the development of institutional self studies. Sites for the workshops are in both the north and south of California (except for the chair training) in order to facilitate access. The schedule is as follows.

Fall 2000 Self Study Workshops
Wednesday, September 13, 2000
Diablo Valley College
Wednesday, September 20, 2000
El Camino College
Thursday, September 21, 2000
Long Beach City College

Fall 2000 Team Training Workshops
Friday, September 15, 2000
Contra Costa College
Friday, September 22, 2000
Cypress College

Spring 2001 TeamTraining Workshops
Friday, January 19, 2001
Cosumnes River College
Friday, January 26, 2001
Santa Ana College

Team Chair Training
Friday, August 18, 2000 at the Westin Hotel, SFO

ACCREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER TRAINING

In order to facilitate communications with Commission staff, each member institution has an appointed Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)---the individual who acts as the contact person between the campus and the Commission. The ALO assumes responsibility for staying informed on policies and procedures related to accreditation and for keeping the Chief Executive Officer informed on all relevant accreditation activities and issues. The ALO is expected to provide continuity for campus accreditation processes by maintaining files on the activities of prior accreditations, including all self studies, related correspondence with the Commission, and other pertinent materials. Other responsibilities of the ALO include assisting in the preparation and submission of the annual report, assuring that the Commission is notified of any substantive changes, and facilitating reports on progress toward meeting the recommendations resulting from the most recent evaluation. The office of the ALO typically coordinates institutional accreditation activities in advance of evaluation visits and assists with follow up activities.

Recent conversations with ALO's have revealed that specific training would be of help to these individuals, since some colleges tend to change the ALO assignment somewhat regularly and/or the appointed person is not clear on what the position entails. Commission staff have begun planning for such training in the 2000-2001 academic year. Planning will include a survey of ALO's to determine specifics of the training. Anticipated objectives of this training will be to increase the effectiveness of ALO's, encourage a level of involvement with Commission staff that is less episodic (e.g., at self study time), and impact Commission service in assisting institutions with self improvement. Announcement of training dates will be made in the coming weeks.

COMMISSION TO HOLD RETREAT

As part of its June meeting, the Commission will hold a one-day retreat at which it will discuss and listen to presentations on current accreditation concerns such as distance learning. Commission retreats, held annually and alternating between one-day and three-day activities, serve to keep Commissioners informed on contemporary accreditation trends and issues.

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An Institutional Culture of Evidence—Some Further Observations

by

Darlene Pacheco, Assistant Director

Previous editions of Accreditation Notes have carried articles concerning the need for institutions of higher education to develop an institutional culture that values evidence of its achievement. While some ACCJC member institutions continue to grapple with what constitutes such a culture and with how to develop strategies that can effect the changes in institutional attitudes and activities necessary to promote it, other institutions are showing progress in this area, and some are well on the way to infusing their campuses with the notion that assessment is a valuable thing. In short, ACCJC member institutions are in various stages of development in their commitment to assessment as means of determining effectiveness.

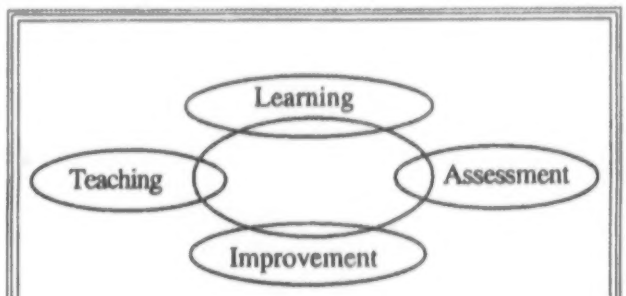
The recent California Assessment Institute (the fifth of such efforts) provided some 170 attendees from 42 member colleges the opportunity to participate in a two-day, intensive round of workshops and presentations on assessment. Focusing on effective approaches to assessment, presenters urged that institutions begin looking at evidence about themselves in terms of both external expectations (accountability) and internal objectives and mission. Presentations addressed how institutions can gather information on student learning outcomes as evidence of institutional effectiveness.

Participation in this latest Assessment Institute has prompted me to think further about the whole question of student learning outcomes and to ponder how those institutions whose culture emphasizes evidence might be different from those who do not have that as a prime motivator. One of the prompts came from keynote speaker Tom Angelo who advocated the doing of assessment "as if learning matters most." It is my observation that this focus will impel campuses to regard evidentiary activities as pivotal to institutional mission, goals, and objectives. I believe that this focus will lead institutions to evaluation of student learning outcomes as a matter of routine and will result in institutional self evaluation through consideration of:

- what competencies, knowledge, and skills students are expected to acquire upon completion of courses, programs, certificates, and degrees.
- how these competencies, knowledge, and skills can be documented in general, vocational, and basic skills education.
- how student services programs can develop measurable goals and objectives that support students in their educational development.

In short, doing assessment "as if learning really mattered" should embed assessment in the college culture and lead to the creation of broad-based institutional support for planning, research, and evaluation on an on-going basis, all focused on student learning outcomes. Colleges doing assessment "as if learning really mattered," unlike those who are not committed to the notion, have decided what assessment is, what it is not, what it is to be used for, and what its relationship is to the college mission. They have come to value a campus climate conducive to using information to know what improvements to make and have developed strategies for doing assessment, as well as for socializing the internal stakeholders to a culture that values using assessment results to satisfy both intrinsic and extrinsic motives.

The key purpose of assessment, it seems to me, is improvement. And the key constituency is the faculty. Inasmuch as faculty comprise the constituency that guides the learning/teaching process (the heart of the mission of a college), their ownership of the assessment process is vital to its success. Faculty who embrace this process of self-renewal have reached the conclusion that teaching and learning can be continuously improved, and they prize an environment of inquiry and evidence, believing that assessment is not an end in itself, but a means for promoting the evolution of students. The loop they find in this process is one that connects teaching to learning, learning to assessment, assessment to improvement, and improvement to teaching as seen below.



The Loop

Institutions whose faculty do not view assessment as having an academic impetus are finding it difficult to invest their time in the information-gathering that illuminates institutional decision-making and planning, and they continue to characterize assessment as an activity designed to satisfy external stakeholders (real or imagined) rather than as a means for developing self-awareness and self-improvement. Clearly, then, the faculty role in assessment is critical to the enterprise and faculty must reach a level of comfort with defining such things as measurable program and course objectives.

Central to understanding assessment is attention to both the outcomes and the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Institutions that are using assessment to promote changes in their cultures have recognized this concept. They have determined that what students learn is important, but so is the process by which they learn. They also know that institutional effectiveness is reflected in the extent to which students are helped to become learners in a more active and conscious way, participating in both setting and reaching academic goals.

Conversations with institutions that have promoted doing assessment "as if learning matters most" reveal that they are starting to see that on-going institutional self-reflection and evidence-based thinking about teaching, learning, and student growth reaps benefits. They note that, as faculty have more clearly defined the goals and objectives of their courses, programs, and degrees, as well as the competencies of their graduates, they find a new enthusiasm for teaching. They are beginning to confirm their belief that, as students experience an active connection between their educational activities and the programs and services that support their personal and academic development, they appear to attain a better awareness of their values, beliefs, and preferences; they become more engaged in their academic work, both affectively and intellectually. These institutions are investigating the hypothesis that, if students interact more regularly with both academic staff and other students, persistence and retention rates will improve. And, ultimately, both accountability and institutional effectiveness will be enhanced.

ACCJC's commitment to supporting its member institutions in the development of assessment plans continues to motivate its sponsorship of the Assessment Institutes. Planning has begun for an October 2000 institute in Oakland to be hosted by the colleges of the Peralta Community College District.

ACCJC DISTANCE LEARNING REPORT

In an effort to gather baseline data on what ACCJC member institutions are currently doing in distance learning, colleges are being asked to complete a questionnaire as part of their submission of an annual report. While institutions had been queried about distance learning in previous annual reports, the current state of this rapidly-growing phenomenon has prompted the need to know in more specific terms what, in fact, our colleges are doing. Accordingly, those responsible for providing ACCJC with information on this year's annual report will find a request for a more thorough report. (Subsequent surveys will request updates only.) Once collected, it is expected that the data will illuminate the extent to which colleges are engaging in distance learning and will inform upcoming Commission deliberations about policy and changes in standards outlined in Project Renewal (see article page 1).

Institutions are being asked to provide information regarding the type of delivery mode employed in distance courses being offered, the semester in which such courses were first offered, the type of credit carried by such courses, and information regarding their development. Colleges are also asked to provide enrollment data and whether or not the college is offering 50% or more of a degree or a certificate via distance learning.

The survey attempts to cover the range of distance delivery modes, course developers, and credit types institutions are using. Possible delivery modes range from audio tapes, canned telecourses, interactive telecourses, and traditional delivery augmented with web sites and/or e-mail to interactive internet courses. Developers of such courses may include faculty within and outside the discipline of the course, faculty whose job it is to develop distance courses, developers of a commercial venture, and combinations of these. Credit types presumably include: transfer, AA/AS degree, non-degree applicable, and non-credit.

Colleges are urged to be as complete as possible in their responses to the questionnaire since good data will ensure that the Commission can make informed decisions.

Evaluation Schedule for Fall 2000

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding an institution's qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo a comprehensive visit in Fall 2000 and a review by the Commission at its January 2001 meeting. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to Executive Director David B. Wolf at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. For consideration, such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

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Windward Community College

Accreditation Notes is published quarterly by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

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Accreditation Notes
3402 Mendocio Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

June 2000

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

APPOINTMENTS MADE TO COMMISSION

A Selection Committee, constituted for the purpose of naming Commissioners from among applicants, met at the end of April. Results of the meeting were the appointment of a new member who will begin Commission service on July 1, 2000 and reappointment of three current members to additional terms. Appointments include the following individuals.

Mr. Michael Widener

Mr. Michael G. Widener, Professor of History at **Compton Community College**, will serve on the Commission as a faculty member. Mr. Widener has taught at the college since 1969, and has been active in the Academic Senate, serving as president and as vice president. He has also been active in recruitment activities for the college and has done public service with many community organizations. Mr. Widener has been on accreditation evaluation teams from 1972 to the present and has co-chaired standards for Compton Community College's accreditation self studies. He reports looking forward to contributing to "the valuable service that the Accrediting Commission provides for both public and private education." Mr. Widener holds degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Mr. Ernest "Chuck" Ayala, a public member, has been selected to serve a second term on the Commission. Mr. Ayala, a native San Franciscan, has been president of the Board of Governors for the San Francisco Community College District and is currently president and CEO of Centro Latino de San Francisco, a community-based agency serving seniors, youth, and families in the community. Mr. Ayala is active in civic affairs, and, among his many activities, serves as a Senator to the California Senior Legislature.

Ms. Jane S. Hallinger, who was seated on the Commission at the June 1999 meeting to replace a retired faculty member, has been reappointed to the Commission. Ms. Hallinger is an Associate Professor of English and Communications at **Pasadena City College** where she has taught since 1978. Her many activities include the presidencies of the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges and the Californians. In addition to her year on the Commission, Ms. Hallinger has served on several accreditation evaluation teams and chaired self study standard committees on her campus.

Dr. Margaret Hartman, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at **California State University, Los Angeles,** was appointed to the Commission for a second term as the representative of the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. Dr. Hartman held the rank of Professor at **California State University, Los Angeles** before becoming an administrator and has had a long history of accreditation activities. Dr. Hartman begins her second term on July 1, 2000.

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Commissioner Honored

Commissioner **Celina Sau Lin Ing,** Professor of Computer Science at **Sacramento City College** is completing the term of her appointment, having served on the Commission since 1992. In her eight years of service, she has served on most of the major committees of the Commission as well as on many institutional evaluation teams. During her final meeting, Commissioners presented Dr. Ing with a resolution recognizing her many contributions to the accreditation enterprise and honored her as a gracious, respected, and esteemed colleague. Dr. Ing's plans include serving on institutional evaluation teams and participating in the field activities of Project Renewal, the Commission's plan for a comprehensive evaluation of its processes and standards scheduled to take place over the next two years.

Dr. Celina Lin Sau Ing

Commission Chair Completes Term

Commission chair, **Leon Baradat,** Professor of Political Science at **Mira Costa College,** completed a two-year term as Chair of the Commission with the June 2000 meeting. Professor Baradat will continue serving on the Commission, completing the remainder of an appointed three-year term. In addition to chairing the Commission and its Executive Committee, Mr. Baradat served as the ACCJC representative to the WASC Board. He also served on the Interregional Accrediting Committee created for the accreditation of Western Governors University, several of the standing committees of the Commission, and on institutional evaluation teams. Mr. Baradat reports that he has enjoyed chairing the Commission and that he looks forward to finishing out his term. Mr. Baradat has served on the Commission since 1993.

Leon Baradat

Palomar College President Dr. George Boggs will become Chair of the Commission on July 1, 2000.

Commission Institutional Actions: June 2000

Reaffirmed Accreditation

City College of San Francisco
Columbia College
Defense Language Institute
Feather River College
Fresno City College
Modesto Junior College
Guam Community College
Hawaii Tokai International College
Heald Colleges
Lake Tahoe Community College
Los Angeles Harbor College
Reedley College
West Los Angeles College

Accepted Interim Report With Visit

College of Alameda
Fullerton College

Accepted Focused Midterm Report With Visit

American Academy of Dramatic Arts West

Accepted Interim Report

Deep Springs College
Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising
Victor Valley College

Accepted Progress Report

College of the Desert
Contra Costa College
San Francisco College of Mortuary Science
Ventura College

Accepted Addenda to Annual Report

Lassen Community College

Accepted Substantive Change Report

College of Micronesia---FSM
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health

Placed on Warning

Barstow College
Kelsey-Jenney College
Los Angeles Southwest College

Accepted Report

Peralta Community College District

Note: The Commission policy on public disclosure was recently revised such that, beginning with the January 2000 meeting, all Commission decisions regarding the accredited status of member institutions are made public. Of particular interest in this regard: A Deferral Decision on accredited status and the decision to place an institution on Warning status (not previously reported publicly) will now be public actions.

Commission Actions: Policy

The Conflict of Interest Policy is predicated on the notion that the integrity of the accrediting process must be protected by all those who participate in it. It addresses issues of conflict of interest for Commissioners, team chairs and team members, consultants, administrative staff, and representatives from other agencies. It also sets forth the conditions under which a Commissioner must recuse him/herself, as well as conditions under which he/she may not vote on the accredited status of an institution.

The policy has been under review since the June 1999 meeting, and changes to the policy aim to increase assurance that decisions are made fairly and impartially while avoiding allegations of undue influence. Those changes include an explicitly stated time period for which team members and chairs must refrain from relations with the institutions they evaluate. Also, the policy now clearly states that Commissioner relationships with colleges, districts, and systems expire five years after the relationship ends. Regardless of this five-year limitation, the individual is expected to refuse an assignment if the existence of such relationship would in any way interfere with his/her objectivity. Also added to the policy is a list of connections with institutions that clearly do not create a conflict or appearance of a conflict of interest. The policy will be reviewed by the field preparatory to a final reading at the January 2001 Commission meeting.

The policy on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members is intended to replace an existing policy and to serve as a "job description" for Commissioners. The policy delineates the purposes of accreditation and speaks to issues of confidentiality, avoidance of conflict of interest, and adherence to established bylaws and policies. It also sets forth the responsibilities of the Commission as a whole as it establishes and reviews policies, standards and practices, and evaluates and determines the accredited status of institutions. Included in this policy are statements of what is expected of individual Commissioners. This policy will now undergo field review before the second reading at the January 2001 Commission meeting.

At its January 2000 meeting, the Commission conducted a first reading on a policy titled Code of Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions and sent it to the field for review. Field review was generally positive and yielded a few suggestions for minor changes. However, as a result of communications with the Department of Education, the Commission included policy statements ensuring that all final team reports are forwarded to institutions before the decision on accredited status is made. The policy will be reviewed by institutional members and receive a second reading in January 2001.

Consistent with Commission procedure, policies are brought back for second readings after review by the field. Comment from member institutions on the Interregional Policies on the Accreditation of Institutions Operating Across Regions was highly favorable. The second reading resulted in adoption. These policies are intended to establish and define the respective roles of the regional higher education accrediting commissions in assuring quality and encouraging the improvement of affiliated institutions operating interregionally. They were developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions and are designed to address concerns arising from differences that may exist among regional commission criteria and their application in branch-campus operations. These policies are designed to encompass only those instructional activities physically present in another region that operate with appropriate state authorization and that provide the equivalent of 50% or more of a degree program. Each of the higher educational regional accrediting commissions is expected to adopt these policies.

FALL 2000 WORKSHOPS

SELFSTUDY

North—Wednesday, September 13, 2000
Diablo Valley College
South---Wednesday, September 20, 2000
El Camino College
South---Thursday, September 21, 2000
Long Beach City College

TEAM TRAINING

North—Friday, September 15, 2000
Contra Costa College
South—Friday, September 22, 2000
Cypress College

Workshops are held 9:00 a.m. to 3:00p.m.

Fall Assessment Institute

The Fall California Assessment Institute, sponsored by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the RP group, the Chief Instructional Officer's, the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges, and the California Community College Council for Staff Development will be hosted by the colleges of the Peralta Community College District. It will be held on October 22, 23, and 24 in downtown Oakland at the Oakland Marriott Hotel. Funded by a grant from the Chancellor's Office, this is the fifth in a series of institutes designed to provide teams from member institutions with activities and presentations that will encourage development of a campus culture that fosters a focus on student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Keynote speaker for the opening session will be **Dr. Constance Carroll**, President of San Diego Mesa College and former Chair of the Commission. Dr. Carroll is a widely recognized educational leader who has a long history of involvement in both assessment and accreditation issues.

The workshops will feature presentations and hands-on activities designed to teach both theoretical and practical aspects of student learning outcomes assessment. Information can be obtained by calling the office of Judy Walters, Vice Chancellor for Educational Services for the Peralta Community College District at 510-466-7302 or from the Assessment Institute web site: www.ca-assessment-inst.org/reg.html.

1999-2000 Institutional Annual Reports

All ACCJC member institutions are expected to submit an Annual Report. This report is used to collect information on issues dealing with programs and curriculum, fiscal status, planning, and distance learning. The report form was revised this year in an effort to ensure that respondents from the colleges would interpret the questions consistently. An additional value of the Annual Report is identifying institutional plans which may trigger Substantive Change action as well as those plans that have resulted from recommendations made by accreditation teams. Following is a brief description of what the institutions have reported:

Program additions and deletions. The overwhelming majority of additions were concentrated in computer-related degrees and certificates, especially in graphic design. Another notable increase was in the medical fields, with almost as many program additions as in all other academic disciplines combined. New vocational certificate programs constituted 21% of the additions. Programs deleted were in traditional vocational areas such as printing, aeronautics, and construction.

Offerings in other locations. Fourteen new or planned centers or locations were reported, ranging from leased classroom space to purchased new facilities. Colleges continue to offer courses at local high schools and community and government agencies. Regulations for participation in federal financial aid programs require that the existence and review of these centers/locations be recorded.

Contracts with other agencies providing instruction. The typical pattern of contracts is for the institution to provide instructional activities for a business, governmental entity, or some other organization. Cases where the situation is reversed, i.e., the college contracts with another organization that provides the instruction for the college, are relatively few and are clustered in a limited number of areas. The most common field for these agreements is cosmetology and related beauty training. Computer training contracts are beginning to be reported, and two colleges have contracted out for flight training and the commercial fishing industry, respectively.

Ending balance. Very few institutions reported that they would not end the year with a positive operating balance. Problems identified by colleges included expenditures to fund previously unfunded retiree benefits and inadequate funding for the college in the district allocation model.

Audit exceptions. Of the colleges reporting audit exceptions, many cited a new requirement that public colleges report general fixed assets separately. Other exceptions related to implementation problems with new software and not correctly following institutional procedures. Several exceptions dealt with errors in Federal financial aid.

Student Loan Default Rates. In recent years, there has been a decline in student loan default rates. Very few institutions reported default rates above 20%. The trend of increasing numbers of institutions withdrawing from the loan programs appears to have leveled off.

Major changes. About half of the colleges indicated major changes were underway, the majority dealing with planning and research issues. Changes also included plans for administrative reorganization and plans to fill leadership vacancies. Three institutions reported an intent to shorten the length of the semester, and two (one of the Pacific members and one denominational member) plan to offer bachelor's degrees.

As mentioned above, one of the changes made to the Annual Report questionnaire this year was to ask that institutions identify planned changes that resulted from recommendations made by evaluation teams and the Commission. This information will be reviewed to provide information regarding the impact of these recommendations.

The information gathered on distance learning will become part of the activities of the Commission as it deliberates the issues attending quality assurance in distance learning.

Commission Holds Retreat

As part of its regular activities, the Commission holds retreats at which, it addresses emerging accreditation issues in depth. The retreats are held routinely--one year the retreat is held in June the day after the regular meeting, and the next year, it is held in March. The June retreat is a one-day activity; the March Retreat is a three-day activity. Commissioners prepare in advance through extensive reading on the issue at hand and have the opportunity to hear from experts in the field.

The June Retreat (held on June 7) focused on two issues: (1) Commission excellence/evaluation and (2) distance learning. The discussion on Commission excellence/evaluation was facilitated by **David Viar, Executive Director** of the **Community College League of California** and **Commissioner Wallace Albertson**. The distance learning discussion focused on work presented by **Dr. Sally Johnstone, Director** of the **Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications,** an initiative of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

Review of Commission processes and standards occurs in six-year intervals, paralleling the regular cycle of institutional accreditation. Called Project Renewal (See the April edition of ***Accreditation Notes*** for a description of the project), the evaluation plan for this cycle includes an appraisal of the Commission's procedures, processes, services, and material---in short, a self appraisal. The goal of the discussion on Commission excellence was to identify the key elements of qualities and practices that would define excellence and to determine how best to measure them. The wide-ranging discussion resulted in the identification of some of the salient features of excellence in boards such as the Commission. These variables include the Commission mission, policy development, Commission unity, Commission and the Executive Director, Commission and those it serves, and monitoring and evaluating Commission functions. The Evaluation and Planning Committee will now take the initiative for developing an evaluation instrument and processes for evaluation for review at the January 2001 Commission meeting.

The fact that member institutions are adding distance learning courses and programs at a significant rate continues to prompt Commission disussion of quality assurance for such education. The retreat activities regarding distance learning included Dr. Johnstone's presentation and a group exercise in which Commissioners used current ACCJC standards to analyze scenarios of realistic institutional enterprises in distance learning. The objective of the exercise was to determine the strengths and weaknesses of these standards in the evaluation of programs in distance learning.

Dr. Johnstone's presentation featured a review of evaluation guidelines and protocol questions that have been developed by a WCET team. The guidelines are designed to assist in institutional self-study and in accreditation evaluation of an institution's capabilities and practices in distance learning. The guidelines were based on the WCET team's broad experiences in distance learning and included interviews with representatives of the regional accrediting commissions, as well as with individuals known to have rich experience in quality assurance for distance learning.

One outcome of these distance learning activities will be to support the Commission in the revision of the current accreditation standards as part of the activities of Project Renewal.

Evaluation Schedule for Fall 2000

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo a comprehensive visit in Fall 2000 and a review by the Commission at its January 2001 meeting. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to Executive Director David B. Wolf at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. For consideration, such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

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October 2000

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

We Hear What You're Saying: 2000 Accreditation Survey Results

Accreditation provides institutions an impetus for the regular and comprehensive evaluation necessary for continuous improvement. Because the same evaluation is necessary for ACCJC to improve its processes and standards and to assess the value of accreditation for institutional improvement, the Commission has undertaken Project Renewal. One of the fundamental promises of the project is to seek guidance and involvement from representatives of our member institutions. This article outlines key results of a survey conducted in spring 2000 which gathered opinions about Commission standards, processes, and future directions.

Enlisting the help of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, we distributed a survey to 1267 self study standards chairs, team chairs and team members, CEOs, Accreditation Liaison Officers, and Academic Senate Presidents. As we had hoped, over half of those who received surveys responded, representing a wide variety of orientations to the issues. The highest percentage of participation in the survey was from faculty (33.2%) followed by other administrators (not including CEOs, CIOs, or CBOs) (22.4%). Representatives from California and the Pacific Island colleges participated, as well as individuals from public and private institutions. The greatest representation in terms of accreditation experience came from those who had served as self study chairs (23.9%), self study standards chairs (54.4%), or members of visiting teams (50.5%). Clearly, respondents had served in more than one accreditation capacity in many instances.

The overall value of the accreditation process was affirmed in the survey...the current standards received very high approval ratings....respondents are pleased with ACCJC efforts to communicate with, train and assist colleges...

The overall value of the accreditation process was affirmed in the survey, especially its usefulness in identifying important issues which colleges need to address and in stimulating institutional improvement. The survey confirmed that individuals who participate in the process derive personal benefit from it. The most important stakeholders in the accreditation process were identified as Students/Learners (85.9%) and Institutions (65.9%). The least important stakeholder was the media (0%).

Overwhelmingly, respondents are pleased with ACCJC efforts to communicate with, train, and assist colleges. Handbooks, workshops, staff support, and communication of Commission decisions to the institutions all received very positive responses ranging from 96.8% to 99.8%. However, far fewer of the respondents, 72.4%, indicated that they believed that the Commission takes negative action when warranted. Of those who knew about the ACCJC web site, almost all, 97.3%, found it helpful, but less than a third of the respondents indicated they were aware of its existence. The Assessment Institute was also highly rated in its helpfulness in focusing institutional attention on measurement of student learning, but 47.3% of the survey participants did not respond to the item, suggesting they had not attended an institute.

The current standards received very high approval ratings. They were judged as quite appropriate for assessing the quality

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of a college, with the standard on Educational Programs yielding the highest ratings at 98.1%. The standards were judged as clearly stated, with ratings on individual standards ranging from 97.6% (Institutional Mission) to 91.0% (Institutional Effectiveness). In addition, the standards were found to be sufficiently comprehensive to assess the types of institutions the Commission serves, with favorable responses ranging from 97.8% to 93.5%.

How useful is accreditation for bringing about institutional change? According to the survey, accreditation

- encourages colleges to review and update mission and goals (93.2%),
- helps develop measures of effectiveness that are useful at the institutional level (84.2%),
- stimulates program review (88.9%),
- helps link program review to planning (84.4%),
- stimulates institution-wide planning (89.5%),
- improves the overall college planning process (87.2%), and
- improves written policies and procedures (83.5%).

Results suggest that accreditation is less effective for

- improving student learning outcomes (58.6%) or
- developing measures of effectiveness that are useful at the course level (39.6%).

Survey results also indicate that accreditation is not particularly effective in helping institutions

- broaden diversity (52.9%),
- improve relations among campus groups (53.7%),
- improve the functioning of the Board of Trustees (49.3%),
- improve staff development (59.3%), or
- improve computer support services (49.7%).

When asked to evaluate the accuracy of the institutional Self Study and the Team Report, respondents judged the Self Study as accurate, but they did not view it as accurate as the Team Report. In all eighteen areas surveyed, the Team Report was thought to be more accurate, with respondents rating it "accurate" or "very accurate" 92.2% of the time for College Mission to 81.7% for Function of the Board of Trustees. The accuracy of the Self Study ranged from 89.4% for College Mission to 68.3% for Learning Outcomes.

On issues of change, ACCJC wanted to know what role it should assume in the future. Respondents told us they thought accreditation processes should be integrated into the ongoing improvement of institutions (93.8%) and that the process should hold achieved learning as a central commitment and as evidence of institutional quality (90.6%). Of relatively low priority were efforts to seek outside influence on accreditation processes. Only 31.6% rated building and engaging in partnerships, alliances, and collaborations that shape and advance higher education as a high or extremely high priority and only 40.7% rated seeking more input from business and industry as an important priority.

In keeping with its intent and design, the results of the survey give us clear direction in a wide variety of areas. The results have already been employed to devise a second survey focused specifically on the standards. Those results will provide more detailed guidance in the revision of the standards and related training processes and materials. In-depth interviews are also about to begin, once again having the basis of their content in the survey results. An External Review Committee charged with assessing ACCJC processes will consider the survey results as it makes recommendations for change and improvement. The survey has achieved what it set out to do. The Commission has much to ponder and incorporate into the renewal process. To those of you who invested the significant amount of time required to complete the survey and offer your comments, we extend our appreciation.

Interregional Staff Retreat

In late August, ACCJC staff attended the 2000 Regional Accreditation Staff Retreat in New Orleans. The general purpose of the retreat, held every other year, is to provide a forum for the staffs of the six regional accreditors to come together to review current issues and trends in higher education accreditation. This retreat, held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Association of Specialized Accreditors (ASPA), allowed for joint meetings with some 30 specialized accreditors. It also included participation by staff of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Joint sessions of the retreat focused on several themes: cooperative efforts between the regional and specialized accreditors, assessment of student learning outcomes, streamlining accreditation, and compliance issues. The joint program began with "Accreditation 101" for new staff and included both a show case presentation by three specialized accreditors who provided an overview of how their organizations do business, and a "share fair" in which the various regional and specialized accreditors highlighted initiatives and programs. Breakout sessions included case

study presentations on regional and specialized collaboration in visiting an institution as a single team, using technology to enhance the accreditation process, and an update on a Pew Charitable Trust project that involves both regional and specialized accreditors in discussions of the outcomes from a 21st century liberal education. Other discussions examined the responsibility of accreditors for informing the public and other interested stakeholders of the purpose and role of accreditation, and how the training of evaluators might make for more meaningful accreditation. A shared plenary session dealt with values held by accreditors.

Sessions which included only the six regional accreditors focused on learning through case studies and concentrated on the exploration of new approaches to accreditation, keeping up with trends in instructional change, defining accreditation standards in a changing environment, and reviewing successful strategies for dealing with day-to-day details such as managing student complaints against institutions, maintaining a web site, managing the office work flow, and conducting a comprehensive examination of an accrediting agency.

As with the previous retreat, Distance Education continued to be a topic of discussion. The regional executive directors, believing it useful to declare a common approach to education for which regional boundaries do not appear relevant, have developed a document addressing electronically mediated instruction offered at a distance– ***Inter-Regional Statement on the Evaluation of Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs***. They have also collaborated with the Western Cooperative for Education Telecommunications (WCET) in the draft of a document titled ***Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs: Evaluation Guidelines***. These documents were reviewed in both plenary and breakout sessions led by **Sally Johnstone** of WCET and **Charles Cook** of the New England Association .

One other plenary presentation on Distance Education dealt with how accrediting agencies are dealing with new models in higher education. The specific instances of these models included Open University, Jones International University, and Western Governors University.

All in all, the retreat met its goals of information-sharing, networking, discussion of issues and problem solving, and staff development. The next interregional retreat is scheduled for 2002.

Something New From ACCJC

In an effort to stay current with changes occurring in teaching and learning in member institutions, an online training course for experienced team evaluators has been created by ACCJC staff. The course, intended for those evaluators who have served under the current (1996) standards, is based on materials in the 1997 Handbook for Evaluators and permits a potential evaluator to move through the content at his or her own pace. Those individuals completing the training on line are not expected to attend a team training workshop in person. Potential team members who have not yet served on a team are still required to attend a training session in person.

Basic format for the training is a narrative from a hypothetical evaluator who is telling the story of serving on a team. The narrative catalogues the evaluator's experiences from being invited to the end of service. Below is a brief sample of the training. Underlined words in blue color are hot-linked to instructional materials that explain Commission expectations of evaluators.

The Personal Narrative of an ACCJC Team Evaluator

In February, I was invited to serve on an accreditation team to do a comprehensive visit to one of the member institutions of ACCJC. I accepted the invitation after I determined that there was no conflict of interest in my serving on such a team. I returned the forms to the Commission office, providing staff with current information, and I requested the **Evaluator Handbook** and the **Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual** so that I could do some reviewing. I was particularly interested in the expectations of team members and the Porterfield Statement because they speak to staying flexible, objective, and relying on evidence and Commission Standards in making decisions.

The team chair wrote to welcome me aboard, to provide me with information about team logistics, and to remind me that I would be receiving the college's self study materials in the mail as well as materials from the Commission. The chair also asked me for specific information regarding my preferences for primary and secondary responsibility in covering standards in the self study.

A group of evaluators assigned to Spring 2001 teams has been selected to do the training and provide staff with feedback. Once the feedback has been received, staff will make modifications so that this training can be more broadly used in the 2000-2001 academic year. More on this activity later...

Partnerships

Beginning in January 2000 the Commission and staff have been devoting much attention to Project Renewal, a thorough review of all aspects of the ACCJC operations. In so doing, we are taking note of many issues that would prompt changes in our standards, policies, procedures and practices. These would include such matters as the measurement of student learning, distance education, virtual libraries, technology planning, to name but a few. One item on this list that has unique quality dimensions is the matter of partnerships.

Partnerships are not a new concept for two year colleges. Much in the way of joint efforts and cooperative ventures have been undertaken for many years.

The Accrediting Commission has particular interest in partnerships that bear on the core mission of the institution, and this tends to involve the delivery of courses and instructional programs. For example, the Commission has a detailed policy on "Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations" (pg. 44 in the *Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual*), and the policy on "Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals" (pg. 36). (Please note that all partnerships are enhanced by clear partnership agreements - - see the policy on Contractual Relationships sited above.) However, the types of partnerships now being explored, and in some cases implemented by member institutions, are much more various and creative than we have seen historically. Two classes of partnership have emerged that are of increasing importance. The first has to do with the acquisition of important instructional or student support services. These may involve the provision of online information access services (databases, full-text periodical support, etc.), distance education related matters ("platform" and "portal" services), or important student services (admission processing, financial aid support, etc.). Vendors for these services appear to be increasing in number and in many cases offer outstanding products. However, to assure instructional quality, institutions have a special responsibility where the failure on the part of a vendor could result in a disruption of service to the student. Quality assurance requires that agreements and contingency plans can maintain the delivery of essential services to the student.

A second class of emerging partnerships are those in which accredited institutions work together to deliver a range of programs unavailable from the individual institutions. This most frequently takes the form of virtual consortia where distance learning programming is shared by two or more institutions, and in some cases, where two year institutions make agreements with four year institutions for the delivery of services at a particular site. In most cases these joint efforts pose minimum quality assurance challenges because the accredited institution granting the degree continues to take responsibility for the instruction associated with that degree. However, in some cases, consortial efforts are contemplating a degree offered in the name of the consortium. This may suggest that a new accreditable entity is being created.

Partnerships may not be new but some of the creative arrangements in which institutions are now engaged suggest that as we review Commission standards, policies and practices, we make sure that the quality related issues are amended appropriately into them.

Evaluation Schedule for Fall 2000

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo a comprehensive visit in Fall 2000 and a review by the Commission at its January 2001 meeting. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to Executive Director David B. Wolf at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. For consideration, such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

American River College
Bakersfield College
Cerro Coso College
Coastline College
College of the Sequoias
Golden West College
Hartnell College
Hawaii Community College
Honolulu Community College
Kapiolani Community College
Kauai Commmunity College
Leeward Community College
Marymount College
Maui Community College
Orange Coast College
Porterville College
Windward Community College

Summary of Commission Actions for the Past Three Years

Action	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Granted Candidacy	0	0	1	0
Granted Eligibility	0	0	0	0
Initial Accreditation	0	0	0	1
Reaffirm	9	7	3	9
Reaffirm/Interim Report	8	9	4	7
Reaffirm/Interim Report/Visit	5	5	7	5
Warning	0	0	2	3
Probation	1	2	0	0

Actions Taken as a Result of Other Institutional Reports and Visits

Action	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Warning Visits	3	0	0	0
Probation	0	2	2	0
Remove warning	0	0	3	0
Remove Probation	0	0	1	0
Show Cause	0	1	1	0
Termination	0	0	1	0
Substantive Change	6 1 denied	6	8 3 denied	4
Progress Report	11 1 not accepted	10 1 not accepted	10	7
Progress Report/Visit	0	2	2	2
Special Reports	0	2	1	2

Evaluation Schedule for Spring 2001

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo a comprehensive visit in SPRING 2001 and a review by the Commission at its June 2001 meeting. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to Executive Director David B. Wolf at 3402 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. For consideration, such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

Cabrillo College
Cañada College
College of San Mateo
Copper Mountain College
Gavilan College
Imperial Valley College
LA County College of Nursing
Los Angeles Pierce College
Los Angeles Mission College
Los Angeles Valley College
MTI College of Business
Riverside Community College
San Joaquin Valley College
Sierra College
Skyline College
Western Career College

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Spring Team Training Workshops

North—Friday, January 19, 2001
Cosumnes River College, Sacramento

South—Friday, January 26, 2001
Santa Ana College, Santa Ana

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